

than the diameter of the column, and are coloured brown with pale rings: 2nd, short filiform tentacles, about twenty-five in number, arranged in two or three irregular circles round the mouth, coloured a uniform brown; these labial tentacles hardly equal in length the radius of the disk.

Only one specimen of this interesting animal has fallen in my way. When first brought to me, its appearance was that of a mass of dirt which had a certain convoluted shape, and out of which protruded at one place a reddish semitransparent body (the base), and at another some tentacles, which partly folded up on being touched. At first sight I took the animal for an Annelid; but during the night it shuffled off its muddy coating and displayed itself in its true character. It was then seen to have a length of about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches, with a diameter of about a quarter of an inch. The column was quite smooth, cylindrical, and of a brown colour approaching to auburn or chestnut. When examined with a lens, some fine longitudinal lines were perceived, dividing the body at regular intervals, and being about  $\frac{1}{10}$  of an inch apart. Faint angular transverse lines were also visible, pretty closely set. It seemed shy, and never expanded its tentacles completely, except in the dark, when it contracted them if the light of a candle fell upon it. The power of fully withdrawing them seemed to be wanting. They were more than an inch in length when entirely displayed. The next day I perceived it lying in the angle at the bottom of the glass containing sea-water, enveloped in a glaucous semitransparent film of mucus looking like a stout spider's web, in which it moved as a worm moves in its case. It had expanded to a length of  $4\frac{1}{2}$  inches, but on being touched immediately contracted so as to measure only  $1\frac{3}{4}$  inch. It possessed the power of swelling out portions of the column; sometimes the swelling appeared near the middle of the body; sometimes near the base. On some occasions it lay with the lower part of the body bent into a hook; at others it quitted the protection of its tube and floated at the surface of the water. The animal was never observed to wriggle or glide through the water like a worm; all its motions were extremely slow. It was captured at the bottom of a pool in the rocks near Funchal.

### MISCELLANEOUS.

*Note on Physa acuta (Draparnaud).*

By the Rev. ALFRED MERLE NORMAN, M.A.

*To the Editors of the Annals of Natural History.*

GENTLEMEN,—In February last I described in your Journal the well-known European Mollusk, *Physa acuta* (Draparnaud) as having been met with in our Islands. It was mentioned in my paper that the species had been found in a tank at Kew Gardens, and also in "a ditch in the immediate vicinity of London." This last locality was a "brook near the Hampton Wick entrance to Bushy Park;" and the species was presumed by Mr. Choules to have been introduced from this habitat, along with water-plants, into Kew Gardens.

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Specimens sent to me as from the brook were identical with the tank species; and therefore, not seeing any reason to question the correctness of the information received, I did not hesitate, in accordance with Mr. Choules's wishes, to publish the species. It is with much regret that I have now to state that it would seem I have been misinformed by Mr. Choules, and that the species does *not* occur in the brook in Bushy Park. *Physa acuta* must therefore be presumed to have been introduced into Kew Gardens from an exotic source.

Believe me to be, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

Sedgefield, Dec. 30, 1861.

ALFRED MERLE NORMAN.

*On the Reproduction of Porpita.* By M. LACAZE DUTHIERS.

At the end of August and about the middle of September, strong gales from the north-west threw upon one of the beaches near La Calle some *Porpita* in good condition; some of them, preserved in my aquaria, displayed their fringed tentacula, moved from place to place, and soon let fall to the bottom of the vessel a great number of small ovoid bodies marked with a white cross.

Having seen the small Medusæ of the *Veillela*, I soon, by the aid of the lens, ascertained that I had before me exactly similar objects: under the microscope no doubt was possible.

The Medusæ of *Porpita* present the form of a little bell, of which the margin is furnished with a delicate membrane, and the summit bears a mass of brownish matter formed of large globules or cells. Starting from the bottom of the bell, four bands of a very dead white run almost to the margin of the orifice; the rest of the surface is as transparent as crystal. In the thickness of the tissues are lodged some small white bacilli, which give their colour to the bands; and outside these are scattered wide apart some large neurato-cysts, which raise the surface, and almost project from it.

The movements of contraction are exactly similar to those performed by all the Acalephs of this form; they are brisk and intermittent. When the contraction is effected, the water which fills the bell is driven out, and pushes before it the little membrane which borders the orifice.

These little Medusæ are easily recognized, with a lens, from their movements: the arms of the little white cross formed by the bands separate from and approach each other in the dilatations and contractions.

I could not get these young *Porpita* to live more than ten days; and all the changes which I could observe in them were limited to the almost complete disappearance of the large brown granulations at the summit of the bell, the increase of some yellowish granular cells which are observed on each side of the white bands forming the cross, the disappearance of some neurato-cysts, and, lastly, the formation at the summit of the bell of a cellular nipple, the further transformations of which could not be traced.

The little bodies just described detach themselves from the very numerous tentacles which surround the central trunk and clothe all